importance of China is only dimly appreciated by the
nt^Here live approximately four hundred millions of people, the largest fairly homogeneous group of mankind.
Nearly a fourth of the human race, the Chinese outnumber the entire population of the Western Hemisphere. Their total is probably greater than that of populous India and is only slightly, less than that of all Europe. In blood and culture (China is much more nearly uniform than India, Europe, or the Americas.)

Until recently separated from the rest of the world by barriers of mountain, desert, and water which could be traversed only with difficulty, the Chinese developed their political and social institutions, their philosophy, and their economic life with fewer contributions from without than has any other major civilized group of mankind—except perhaps the pre-Columbian cultures in Mexico, Central America, and Peru.)

Chinese culture has been noteworthy both for its excellence and for its influence upon its immediate neighbors. In philosophy it has displayed originality and has had marked social effects. The older political structure endured longer than any other ever devised by man, and, when measured by the area and the number of people governed, was one of the most successful in history. In quality and volume Chinese literature ranks among the greatest produced by the human race. China's art is being more and more enthusiastically acclaimed by Western experts. The economic organization of the Empire made possible the

existence of an enormous population. Chinese culture influenced profoundly all its immediate neighbors—notably the Japanese, the Koreans, the semi-nomadic peoples to the north and west, and the Asiatic peoples to the south, and to a somewhat lesser degree the civilized peoples of Central Asia.

In itself such a civilization deserves study. It is particularly valuable, however, for the perspective which it gives upon our